

# Vancouver Rail Project

With the Vancouver Rail Project, WSDOT proposes construction of a rail bypass in the Vancouver rail yard and elimination of the West 39th Street at-grade crossing. Our goal is to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) by the end of 2001. Construction could start as early as fall of 2002, if additional funding is available.



## Why is WSDOT pursuing improvements to the Vancouver Rail Yard?

This project will improve safety, reduce rail congestion and, as a result, support more reliable Amtrak service. The proposed project will add two new rail bypass tracks and will improve or close West 39th Street at-grade crossing.

People who wish to drive or walk through this rail yard on West 39th Street must currently cross seven sets of railroad tracks. The proposed rail construction will increase this total to nine. The project explores options to enhance safety at this crossing. These options include building a bridge, building a pedestrian and bicycle overpass, or closing the crossing.

## Existing



## Project Facts

- The Vancouver Rail Project was launched in the fall of 1999.
- Between January and late June 2000, the WSDOT project team worked closely with a Community Resource Team (CRT), a group of 18 local people who represented community and regional needs and interests. The Community Resource Team's job was to help the project team develop and shape a set of alternatives to be analyzed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- The project is designed to alleviate passenger train delays caused by freight traffic in the Vancouver rail yard, which is one of the busiest rail yards in the Pacific Northwest.
- The total project construction cost is estimated to be \$32.4 million.

More than 100 trains per day pass through the Vancouver Rail Yard, which serves as a major hub for freight and passenger rail traffic. This project would reduce congestion and help deliver more reliable Amtrak service.

## **The end result**

Construction of double bypass tracks in the Vancouver Rail Yard would allow more fluid movement of passenger and freight trains. In addition, the project could improve safety at the 39th Street crossing. An EIS must be completed and funds must be acquired before construction can begin.

## **What is the project timeline?**

- The EIS process was started in late 1999
- The draft EIS will be presented for public comment in late 2001
- A record of decision is expected in early 2002
- If funding is available, construction could begin as early as fall 2002

## **What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?**

An Environmental Impact Statement studies the impacts and benefits of a proposed project on people and the environment and considers reasonable alternatives to the proposal. The EIS process provides opportunities for all interested parties to learn about the project and provide input.

## **Why is WSDOT conducting an EIS?**

WSDOT is committed to improving Amtrak Cascades service between Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. In order to provide reliable service now and in the future, rail congestion in Vancouver must be alleviated. The EIS will guide the design and construction of rail yard improvements.

## **How can I get involved?**

Your thoughts and opinions are important to us. The public is invited to submit questions and comments about this project. The specific schedule for submitting comments to be included in the EIS will be posted here or are available by calling the WSDOT Rail Office at 1-800-822-2015.

## **What is going to be done to protect the environment?**

The EIS process is designed to consider a number of environmental topics, including wetlands, air quality, noise, fish habitat, and neighborhood qualities. The specific measures required to protect the environment will be determined when the final EIS is completed.

## **How is safety being addressed?**

One of the key components of this project is to improve safety at the West 39th Street crossing. All of the options considered in the EIS process would improve crossing safety.

## **Financial Information**

The project is in its early phases. Additional funds will be required in upcoming biennia to complete construction.

## **Expenditure Plan**

	Prior Expenditures	Remaining Costs	Total
State Funds	\$2,000,000	\$1,227,000	\$3,227,000
Funded subtotal	\$2,000,000	\$1,227,000	\$3,227,000
Unfunded amount		\$29,172,000	\$29,172,000
Total Cost	\$2,000,000	\$30,399,000	\$32,399,000

Financial data is current as of 9/1/01.

## **Government-to-government tribal consultation process**

WSDOT is working with the Chinook Tribe in a number of ways, including personal contacts and mailings.

## **How can I get more information?**

For detailed information about this project, contact the Project Manager:

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